

The Clock Is Ticking

by Jon Couch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preaching the Word of God, living a God-centered life, and serving the Lord with urgency, as the clock is ticking and eternal consequences are at stake.

Duration: 1:00:24

Scripture: Romans 13:1

Topics: "Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the urgency of the times we are living in and the need for repentance and turning to God. He highlights the importance of guarding against the deceitfulness of sin and not being swayed by a man-centered gospel. The speaker also challenges the audience to not just proclaim the message of God, but to live it out in their daily lives. He emphasizes the need to behave like true followers of Christ and not to take God's grace for granted. The sermon references 1 Peter 4:7 and Romans to support these points.

Transcript

Take your Bible. We've got a lot of work to do this morning. We're going to do, I pray, some heavy lifting in Scripture because it is the Word of God.

Romans chapter 13, Romans 13. And I love on the front page of your worship guide, 2 Timothy, preach the Word. Preach the Word in season and out of season.

What that means in the original language is when it's popular and when it's not, stay the course. Preach the Word because it's the Word that's going to heal. It's the Word that's going to transform.

It's the living Word of God that's going to do the work. We're living in these perilous days, as I mentioned. And as I think through that, I even think of what's going on in our country today.

You just need to watch 30 seconds of any presidential debate and you get a good idea of where this country's going. You start with a man-pleasing, man-centered gospel. And what you're going to retain, what you're going to get from a man-pleasing, man-centered gospel is a manufactured gospel that's in direct opposition to the great God of the Bible.

But when you start with man, when you start with being centered around man, you have now moved away from God. See, that's why we need to be a people that's on fire for the Lord, that's ready to go out to make

the difference, that's a living sacrifice, that is palms up, that says, not unto us, not unto us, but to Your name we give glory because of Your mercy, because of Your truth. So how do you get there? Well, you've got to be God-centered, Bible-driven, prayer-saturated, and Christ-exalting.

So when you focus on those four pillars in your life today, there's nothing about health, wealth, and prosperity in this earth as far as God's going to magically bless you. But I do know this, that when Jesus, when He is high and lifted up, God's Word says this, He will draw men unto Himself. It's so critical as we think through this text today in Romans 13.

Romans 13, as we live in this day that is just having a casual view of sin, a casual view of God, a casual view of God's holiness, therefore, we must be a people that is deep into God's Word. God's Word even tells us this, that, Behold, says the Lord, that I will send a famine upon the land. Not a famine of food, not a famine of thirsting for water, but a famine of a hearing of the words of the Lord.

If we are ever living in a day where God's Word has been regulated to the curb and kicked to the curb, it's now. Therefore, what do we do? We must preach the Word in season and out of season. Because why? There will be a time when there will be itching ears.

And when there's itching ears, we know from Scripture there's always going to be a heaping up for teachers of themselves. They'll put into place what's going to pacify them, the people will do. They'll put into place what's going to tickle the ears and do a work in their own life that they think is doing the work, but it's really not doing the work.

It's leading them farther and farther away from God. And so it's high time. Because the message titled today is simply, The Clock is Ticking.

Just picture that for a moment today. Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

The clock is ticking. And so I pray today through God's Word that we will be a people that will sense Him, that will praise Him, and that will love Him like never before. Here it is, Romans 13.

Looking at verses 11 through 14. Let's dig deeply today into God's Word. Context, of course, in Scripture going into this text today is the Apostle Paul writing there to the church in Rome.

He has just said, look, here. Here's the deal. You need to love your neighbors.

Loving them, just not in word, but in deed. Just not in deed, but in true heartfelt love that says here that I'm going to actually deny self and put you, my neighbor, first. You think of what happens in that context as he launches into these verses we're going to look at today as he's saying to love your neighbor more than yourself, as yourself.

Therefore, what happens when we deny self and we put others first, a great love that mirrors, just mirrors, not duplicates because we're not perfect, but a love that mirrors what Christ did for us is now displayed to a lost and dying world. That's why it's so important that we love one another. Jesus said, if you want to come after me, you've got to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.

The very first point he made out of that verse was the hardest thing you and I will ever do, and that's to deny ourselves. And so here's what he says in his glorious word as he wrote through the great Apostle Paul. Romans 13, 11 through 14, and do this, what we just alluded to, knowing the time.

Now it is high time to wake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, therefore, here it is, let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and in envy.

14, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust. Wow! I mean, those are big words, aren't they? If you're trying to accomplish that today in your own flesh, it will never happen. It will never happen.

Satan will beat you into submission at every turn when you try to go do what God's called you to do in your own power. It will never happen. With all the best motives, the right intentions, I'm going to get the day, I'm going to make this happen, I'm going to live for God.

Unless God is the one who's driving you as He's carrying you, you will not be able to accomplish this. Remember, God-centered, Christ-exalting. Bible, Bible.

This is Word here, isn't it? Bible-driven. What's that mean? What God's Word says is where we go. It's the vehicle that takes us where we need to go and prayer-saturated.

So critical here today. Let's examine this first verse together. Verse 11.

And do this, knowing that this time, that now it is high time to wake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. I want you to think through something today here. That Paul wrote this many years ago, correct? But this still applies and is as relevant today as it's ever been.

That knowing the time, knowing the time that we're in here, knowing the season that we're in here, knowing what's going on around us here in our culture today, we must be aware. So many people have their head in the sand. Their head is in the sand.

They just look around and go, hey, man, I went to church today. It was great. I gave God a couple nickels.

I gave Him 30 minutes of my time. Man, I must be in. This thing must be sealed.

Man, life is grand. And they're looking around going, what do you mean? What do you mean we need a revival? What do you mean we need awakening? What do you mean we need to repent? So many people are simply unaware of what's really going on in the American church. Satan's an absolute genius.

I mean, he's a genius. But if I can just get people focused on themselves so that every program, every building they build, everything they do is focused on them and their glory and their praise, I can assure you this, Satan's saying, they're not going to be focused on Jesus. And yet it's all shrouded many times in this aura, if you will, that we love Jesus.

I love what one of the pastors from the persecuted church said. He said, I see the big buildings. I see the big parking lots.

I see all the people in the United States at the American church. But I do not see genuine revival. See, any time you take God out of the equation, you have now removed the source that will bring the repentance, the revival, and the awakening.

You're not going to get to a repentant heart absent of God. You're not going to get to a revival absent of God. By the way, revival is not a series of meetings.

Revival is a change of the hearts. See, this is so pivotal we understand this. It's time.

This isn't like tomorrow. Hey, let's wait around. I know it's time.

It says here in Scripture. But really what he meant was that we can wait on this and delay it a few more days. No, today, now it's time.

It's high time. It's high time that we count the cost. It's high time that we really do self-introspection and go, man, am I really for this? In other words, how much am I for this? As much as God leads me down this path, at what point am I going to tell God no? God, I'll go do X as long as You don't send me down to Y. Okay, now we're putting demands on God.

We're manipulating God. God doesn't work that way. But again, when we come to Him with those palms up, that all we bring to Him is our sin.

It's all I bring to God today is my sin. God doesn't look at me. He doesn't look at you and say, man, I'm so glad they're on my team.

I'm so glad, man, they're talented. I'm glad they're on my team. Man, we can finally accomplish something because so-and-so is on my team.

That's not what God says. God says here, look, I'm going to take your brokenness. I'm going to take your greatest guilt, I'm going to take your greatest shame, and I'm going to do something in your heart as I give you a new heart that will transform your heart and therefore you are going to be a vessel of mine.

You think of Paul there on that Damascus road of Acts 9 that Jesus encountered him. That Jesus put a roadblock in his path. He's going to persecute Christians.

And Jesus is like, no, enough of this. I have chosen you as a vessel of mine to suffer for My namesake. Now go out and proclaim this truth that has radically changed your heart.

Go proclaim this truth. Now the scales are removed. Go proclaim this truth that will set the captives free.

It's high time. It's high time. Knowing the time, that it's high time to awake.

So many people as I travel are asleep at the wheel spiritually. So many dads, so many men are asleep at the wheel spiritually in both their home and in their churches. God's calling, you rise up, old man, today.

Rise up today. Choose this day who you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord's.

I love that verse. Write that down in your notes if you would. Joshua 24, 15.

It's a key verse. If you're a man or a woman, it's going to be pivotal in your life. But specifically, I'm thinking of our men right now.

Joshua 24, 15 simply says this, and if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourself this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river or the gods of the Amorites in this land which you dwell. But as for me and my house, do you see what's

going on here? Do you see what Joshua is saying here? Do you see this? But as for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord. We're going to serve the Lord.

Capital L. Capital O. Capital R. Capital D. It's the proper name of the great God of the Bible. And he's not sitting here going, you know what, I know it's high time, and well, wait a minute, I'm not sure if this is going to work out the way I want it to. No, I'm driving a dagger into the ground today.

But as for me and my house, no matter what happens, no matter what comes our way, no matter if God goes our way or not, we are following God's. Man, we need some people to rise up today. Not tomorrow.

Today. Why? Because we know the time and it's high time to wake out of this sleep. So many times in Scripture, you know, this sleep is a euphemism for what? For death, right? This is not what's being referred to here.

Literally, Paul is showing this church there in Rome what this means. You can't continue to sit with your head in the sand and pretend like nothing's going on. No, rise up this day.

Choose this day. Make a conscious effort this day. As for me and my house, we will serve this Lord.

It's so important that we think through what's at stake. Maybe just think through that right now in your own mind. You have a family.

You have a church. You have friends and coworkers. You have neighbors.

Just think about what's at stake. That if we do not choose this day, if we do not stand for truth, if we do not say, look, I'm going to go God's way, and I know the consequences of obeying God are going to be great, but you know what? I'm going to allow God to handle the consequences because I'm going to walk by faith and not by sight. That doesn't speak well in our American culture because our American culture, again, well, it's all about me, isn't it? I mean, you watch any commercial, it's tailored towards me, right? It's all about you.

You acquiring the high life, right? I mean, you do this, and it's always the scene of, man, there's this party going on, isn't there, in these commercials? Life's good, right? I mean, you drink this. You eat this. You go here.

You do this. Everything's wonderful. Everything's blissful.

Well, I know this from God's Word. Again, when you remove God from any of those scenarios, nothing's blissful. Sin does not create joy.

Sin creates heartache and pain. But what happens in our flesh, this evil flesh that we all have, these bodies of death, man, we will rationalize all day long on avoiding God when God's waiting for us to simply fall on our face and start obeying Him. So pivotal as we think through this today and do this knowing the time, knowing that it's high time, it's intentionality.

Write that down. Intentionality. Also write down urgency.

There's an intentionality. There's an urgency. I can just picture Paul.

By the way, Paul, you think of just a great man of God. Divine revelation. I mean, it didn't have the degrees on the wall.

He just had a personal encounter with Jesus. And he writes the majority of the New Testament because God spoke to him that he had a personal encounter. See, that's the key.

The key is to get in the presence of God and stay in the presence of God. And man, this American culture, it's hard, isn't it? I mean, you turn on the television, you turn on the Internet, you turn on whatever's going on media-wise, and you can get drifting away from God before you know it and you look up and you've drifted miles from Him out of something and over something that seems so mundane. That's the evil one how he works, isn't he? I mean, if you only knew what's going on right now with the same-sex agenda and how as our kids are watching television, just look in the background of some of these shows on Saturday morning and what you see, this rainbow in the background.

That is not by accident. It's all intentional. It's a slow fade.

But as Satan just takes the prey, the P-R-E-Y, and just over time, just lulls it to sleep. And before you know it, you're dead. See, it's high time.

It's high time for the people in the American church to realize that we can no longer afford to sit on the sidelines. It's high time for the people in the American church to get out of the locker room and get into the game. It's high time for the people in the American church to realize that there's a battle raging.

And here's the great news. We have the greatest entity ever in the great God of the universe as literally He's holding Pluto in one hand. He's holding you personally in the other.

And you think about Him doing that with what, seven plus billion people? You talk about the greatness of the great God of the Bible. So we don't need more of us. We don't need more of what we think's going to work.

We just need more of God. And if you want to see the ramifications of what happens when you kick God out of your churches, your homes, your schools, just look at the United States of America today. See, it's high time.

Time to wake up. The clock is ticking. I was thinking through this thought on that first point.

I want you to write this down as key number one. Key number one in this first point. As the clock is ticking, if I am spiritually asleep, I need to wake up.

You know, Jesus says this, He who is not with me is against me. And therefore, he who does not gather scatters. See, the message we receive from the American church many times is this.

Have Jesus in God for an hour, maybe an hour and a half if you're lucky on a Sunday morning. And the remaining 166, 67 hours, just be your own God. Just do whatever you want.

He's okay with it. He hasn't zapped you yet with a lightning bolt. He must be okay with it, right? No, His fury, His wrath is pent up.

By the hardness of your impenitent heart, your refusal to repent, you are storing up wrath for the day to come. That's what we plead with men. We plead with women.

We plead with students. Be reconciled to God's. People are going over cliffs by the droves.

You see it happening all the time. You go to funerals. All the time, I see this.

Well, so-and-so, whoever the name is, they're in a better place. Well, where's that place they're at? Well, they're in heaven. How do we know they're there? They were a good person.

That's not how this works. Everyone's supposedly going to heaven. Have you noticed that? This universalism.

Do you guys know what that is? It's basically this. Everyone ends up in heaven and it's time to partay. There's only one way to the Father.

And His name is Jesus. I'm just right now thinking of Pilate. Remember Pilate in Scripture? Remember Pilate? He's standing in front of Jesus.

Remember he asked that question? What is truth? His major problem was he should have asked who is truth because he was standing in front of the truth. See, it's high time. So many people are asleep and they're standing in front of the truth.

That the truth is right there. That Jesus in His glory, Jesus in His splendor, Jesus in His holiness are right there and they're sitting there going, hey, what's truth? See, it's high time to wake out of this sleep because the clock is ticking. The time is now to sound the trumpets, to rally the troops, to realize that the stakes are of the most extreme nature spiritually.

We can no longer afford to be silent nor we can no longer afford to look the other way. It's so easy, isn't it? I just don't want to get involved. What's going to happen? They're not going to like me.

I'm going to offend somebody. My argument back to that is this. What if by your obedience, you set in motion the reformation that needs to happen in that home or that church? We always look at it from the other side of the fence.

Well, if I do the right thing, I'm going to excommunicate it and ostracize. Hey, welcome to what you signed up for in Christianity. For those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, they will suffer persecution.

The stakes are high. Some of your children perhaps, maybe a husband, a wife, a grandparent, a brother, a sister, that you know right now today that if they check out from this life, that you know based on what you know about them, that they do not know Jesus Christ as that true Lord and Savior. And therefore, they will enter into a godless hell today if they were to die.

See, the stakes are high. There's no greater trial in this life than to exit this life not knowing Jesus. You stack up every trial in your life and it does not remotely compare to the trial of what's going to happen when they go on trial in front of the great God of the Bible, absent of the blood of Jesus to cover their sin.

See, that's the mission. The mission, this is why I love the persecuted church. I love it.

I love it not because it's perfect. I love it because they're sold out and surrendered to the One who is perfect. That they really understand what this thing's about.

That they really get this. They go, man, you know what? We've just lost our home. I just had my family executed, but I've still got Jesus.

I know this in my own life, and shame on me, man, when my car doesn't start, my whole week's shot. Why? Because our comfort and our wealth in the American church has led to our collapse. We've drifted.

Here's the deal. You don't have to drift like 180 degrees from Jesus. Just drift slightly from Him.

And now when you have your aim and your gaze, it's no longer on Him. See, He's not necessarily going, I'm going to have you go into deep sin and deep heartache and deep pain. No, if He can just get you and me just enough off Christ, now when we look up, we're no longer looking at Him.

See, it's high time to wake out of this sleep. It's time to wake up. Because the clock is ticking.

You know, something I thought about on this first point here was that, and it really hit me hard. I was challenged on this even recently, and so I've been praying about it my own life. It's one thing to get up here and proclaim a message.

It's a whole other thing to go live this message. This actually is the easy part. For me to go outside these doors and live what I'm preaching is the most difficult part.

And I thought about that, and I was just convicted by it here recently to be even more fervent in personal evangelism as I'm reaching out to neighbors and whoever else is around me and thinking through that concept. But here's what I started to begin to process. If I really begin to think through, if I really begin to think through that Jesus truly is coming back, that there's going to be a definitive point in time where He comes back, where He returns, that this is going to happen.

I don't know about you, that's great motivation to go start grabbing some ankles that are going into a godless hell, amen? But what happens? I'm guilty. We're just living the dream here in America, aren't we? Man, life is good. Man, we're just floating along.

We're just cruising along. Why the urgency? He hasn't returned yet. Probably not happening for a long time.

Hey, when He starts to return, I'll get ready. You're not going to have time to get ready. I can assure you this.

I don't know how fast you are getting dressed, but twinkling of the eye is pretty quick, isn't it? I've never seen anyone put on their pants that quick. You know what I mean? Why waste your life in hopes of just waiting until the end to get this thing figured out and right? Why not today choose this day who you will serve? Why not today go, you know what? This is going to cost. This is going to hurt.

But you know what? Nothing hurt more than my Savior being brutally executed on a cruel Roman cross as the wrath of God was poured out on Him. Therefore, if He can do that for me, can I forsake myself in this life so that I can send it ahead into the next life? See, it's high time that we wake out of this sleep because the clock is ticking. Look at the 2nd verse here in this context.

Verse 12. And do this knowing the time that now it's high time to wake out of sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and let's put on the armor of light. Again, let's springboard now off of verse 12.

Let's keep this really tight. Let's dig deep. Our salvation in that verse before is nearer than when we first believed.

Now, make sure we understand what this means. Our salvation being nearer. I want you to think about it in this way, in this 3 contexts.

Write down these words. Number 1 is justification. Write this down.

Number 2 is sanctification. And number 3 is glorification. Your justification happened at the cross.

That Jesus Christ, when you're under His blood, you become righteous in Him not by anything you do. Dead people don't make themselves alive. Just write down Ephesians 2. Just read the entire chapter of Ephesians 2. That will explain that.

Enemies of God, children of wrath, children of disobedience, over and over it goes, who we are absent of the blood of Christ. But when the blood of Christ, through that propitiation, that the wrath of God has been appeased, it's been satisfied, the only thing that could satisfy God's wrath was the blood of His only Son. It took the greatest blood ever that's been shed and that's the blood of Jesus to satisfy that wrath as that imputation, if you will.

Not amputation, but imputation. The way to understand that is this, that literally it's kind of the great exchange. That His righteousness for the true believer today has now been imputed to that sinner.

And we give him our sin. Man, that's a lousy deal for him, isn't it? He's like, here, you have my righteousness. Okay, here's my sin.

And he's like, man, that's enough. That's cool. I'll do that deal.

Some died for you. I'm obedient to the Father. I could have called 10,000 angels.

I'm in the Garden of Gethsemane. I'm literally physically exhausted knowing what's going to happen here. But for the joy that's been set before me, I will endure the cross, despising the shame.

Are we getting this now? But He gives everything for us. Man, should we give something back for Him? That's the challenge though in the American church today. We want everything.

We want all the cards stacked in our favor. And we don't want to push anything into the middle of the table. And you see why we're declining rapidly.

I'm convinced if some men and women of God do not stand in this gap soon, I believe you're going to see what happened in Europe happen here in this church. That we're going to start turning these churches into museums. Why? When you abandon God, Ichabod is always right around the corner.

The glory of the Lord will depart sooner or later. See, this is so critical. Our salvation is near.

Here it is. We're justified. We are now going through a sanctification process, right? All of us, if we're believers in this room today for argument's sake, let's pretend we're all believers in Jesus Christ and I pray we are.

But let's pretend like we are all believers in Jesus Christ today. We are on this road called sanctification. Literally, it means it's an ongoing process.

It's ongoing, right? There's some days where all of us in this room go, wow, that was not a good day. That was not a spiritually good day. I need to fade back and punch and repent on that day.

But we're on a process. We're moving towards. But there's also a third one that's called glorification.

The glorification, what a day that's going to be, amen? That when we stand face to face with the King, that we will be like Him. See, our salvation is nearer. Not a justification.

That's already happened. We're being sanctified. He's referring to what's ahead.

This glorification. We've got to look outward. So many times I believe we're so stuck in today because we're not looking for the glory that's to await outward and further down the road.

It's so easy to get stuck in our today, isn't it? I'm there. I get this. How are you going to pay this bill? What's going on with this relationship? Just whatever is in your world, health reports and challenges, heartache and pain and brokenness.

We live in a depraved world. Depraved worlds breed heartache and pain. Therefore, we can be like what was said there in 1 Peter.

Do not think it's strange. Don't look at this and go, man, what's going on? Why am I going through all this? I thought this life was supposed to be grand with no issues. Don't be perplexed.

Just look at it and embrace it and go, okay, God, You led me to this. Somehow You're going to get me through this. We've got to know the time.

It's high time. Now, urgent. Joshua 24, 15, great supporting verse that we awake, that we wake up from our sleep, our spiritual slumber.

We just can't continue to sit back and hope this thing magically works itself out on its own. God even shows us that in Scripture. Man, you go dig the ditches and He'll bring the rain.

He uses us in His sovereignty. Don't miss out on His sovereignty. We can't explain that.

He's sovereign. But in His sovereign plan, somehow He uses sinful people like you and me to accomplish His will for our good and for His glory. So what happens? We then know our salvation is nearer.

This glorification, that day, just write down that day, capital T, capital D. That day is coming. Right now, in the last few minutes, we are nearer, correct? We haven't gotten farther away from that day. We've gotten nearer.

So when it's nearing, there should be urgency. There should be intentionality. There should be a desire, a hunger, a passion that says, man, I want to go make a difference.

I want to leave a legacy for Jesus. I want to leave it all in the field with no regrets. I want to make a difference in my home.

I want to make a difference in my church. I want to make a difference in my community. I want to be sold out and surrendered.

And yes, even if no one likes me, even if none go with me, I'm still going to follow. It's so critical as we process this and think through this in our mind's eye today. Here it is, verse 12.

The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness.

Let us put on the armor of light. Think about this as you're taking notes. You have night.

You have darkness. You have day. You have light.

Just think through what all this means. So many times in Scripture, you see night and darkness. Of course, evil, sin.

You see light. You see darkness. Obviously, glorious, good, holy.

The night is almost gone. In other words, okay, here we go. He's ramping this up even more.

Paul is building an airtight case. Look, it's high time. Your salvation is nearer.

Need to wake up? Clock's ticking. Oh, by the way, here I go again to rebuild and build up my argument. He's saying, oh, the night is almost gone.

This period of time as the clock is ticking is getting shorter and shorter and shorter and shorter, and we just can't sit back and hope this thing somehow resolves itself. See, this night is far spent. It's almost gone.

The day is at hand. We don't know what exactly or when that's going to happen. No one knows.

Not even the Son, Scripture tells us. Only the Father knows the exact point and period in time. But we know this.

We can see prophecy unfolding that we know we're getting closer and closer just from this one text. We know we're getting closer. Therefore, my question to you and to me today is this.

As we're getting closer, are you and I getting more urgent? Are we getting more intentional? Has God gripped our heart in such a way that we look at our own life? You don't have to look at your neighbor or your husband or your wife. Just look at your own life and go, am I? Am I one that can truly say I'm not perfect? But you know what? I see the mission. The mission that Jesus left me was as you are going.

I mean, that's the assumption, isn't it? Man, if I'm really a disciple of Jesus, I'm going to be going, amen? As I am going, as you are going, go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And lo, and lo, I will be with you even to the end of the age. Do you understand who is with you as you go make disciples? I mean, do you really have a clue who is with you? We believe in the Trinity, amen? We believe in the doctrine of the Trinity.

God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three in one. Since that's true, that we know there's deity there between Father and Son and Holy Spirit, have you ever thought about this concept? That Jesus Christ was the only one to have ever professed to be the Messiah that actually arose from the grave, but anything gets better than that. He's the only one that's ever professed and He rose Himself from the grave.

Man, I don't know about you, that takes some mighty power to raise yourself from the dead. Since He's for us, who can be against us? Greater is He that's within you today, husband, father, wife, student. Greater is He that's within you today than he that's in this world.

Do you see what that's saying there? Satan and his minions and all that they do. And man, they beat us down, don't they? If you're running hard after God today, Satan's just not going to sit back and go, yeah, hey, go for it. He's got a shotgun load with fiery darts.

And he is just blasting away trying to discourage you and I to abandon the mission. It's high time though. It's high time not to look at the adversary.

It's high time to run to the one who has the power to deliver us. And His name is Jesus. Let us cast off the works of darkness.

Literally to lay aside. We already heard that verse quoted this morning, but write it down. Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. I'm going to read it to you, but it's an incredible text.

Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and therefore let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy who was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God's. That's a hallelujah moment, isn't it? Man, when you sit at the right hand, you know what that means, don't you? Man, when you get invited to sit at the right hand, man, that's a place of splendor, glory, majesty, holiness. All of that wrapped up into one.

And for the joy who was set before Him, but you back up even further, what's the command there in Hebrews? To lay aside. To cast off. I mean, literally, whatever today is so easily ensnaring you, whatever is ensnaring you, and you know what it is, I know what it is in my life.

I know my struggles, I know my heartache, I know my pain, my depravity. Again, those crevices in my heart, even today that still have some of that sin plaque, if you will, that has to be scrubbed out over and over time. And I know the struggle areas in there.

Whatever that is in your heart today, oh, don't dabble with it. Don't pet it. No, cast it off.

I mean, literally, take it somewhere and destroy it. I mean, just take it and get rid of it. You don't understand here, man.

I'm dealing with this addiction and I can't break it. Jesus can break your addiction. I picture what happens to our sin.

That our sin's cast away as far as the east is to the west. And we sing that song. And I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. It is well with my soul.

Oh, today, whatever darkness is pressing in on you, whatever that sin is that's so easily ensnaring you and me, let's cast this off. I mean, let's just get rid of it. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us to do just that.

1 Peter 2. Write this down. 1 Peter 2, 9-10. 1 Peter 2, 9-10.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that you may proclaim, here it is, the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, who once were not a people, but are now a people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Is that not awesome? Did you catch that part in there? Not just the chosen generation. That's all great stuff.

But I love this part in here. His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you, who stirred, who drew, who wooed you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Amen? I'll tell you what, so many times I'm guilty of looking to the One Myself for my hope, when I should be looking to the One who calls me who is my hope.

And it's so easy in these bodies of death when you answer the call of God to become greatly discouraged. Greatly discouraged. We've got to remember this, that where He calls you and where He guides you, He will also provide for you.

And where He leads you, He will feed you. Therefore, we stay true to whatever call He's placed on your life today. Don't bend.

Don't buckle. Don't flinch. Satan wants to plant in your mind and my mind today to do whatever necessary to abandon the call.

And God, when He puts you in your Jordan, even when the water begins to rise, He's called you to your Jordan for a reason. He's called you there so that His glory might be shown to all the earth. Therefore, we trust Him to make a way where there seems to be no way.

Let us put on the armor of light, that verse also says. Put on means literally to clothe oneself. If you look at the book of Colossians, it's completely rich with this imagery.

As he's writing to the church there in Colossae, he says over and over in that book of putting on and taking off, if you will. Again, in the Greek, it's talking about literally taking off clothing, putting on clothing. We've been now clothed with Christ, amen? We're here in this context clothing ourselves with the armor of light.

I want you to write down just Ephesians 6. I'm not going to read it all, but write down Ephesians 6. Go ahead and read just that whole chapter. If you're a parent today and you've got a kid, you're going to want to re-quote Ephesians 6.1 probably this afternoon at some point. So go ahead and read it.

Go ahead and let the kids know what God's Word says about obedience. So go ahead and read the whole thing. But I'll tell you what, camp out on 10 and following.

Because here we go back to this high time. It's time to wake up. See, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

This war that's going on in your life as a believer and my life as a believer is not against something we see. It's in the spiritual realm that Satan is real, that he literally masquerades as a cosmopolitan of lights. He's not some devil like in a red suit with horns and a weird goatee, funny eyebrows and a pitchfork.

He literally is masquerading as something that looks so good. It looks so appealing. It looks so right.

It looks so truthful, yet it's not right and it's untruthful. So we've got to know there's a war going on. How are we ever going to win the war if we don't acknowledge there's actually a war going on? Therefore, what

happens? In that Ephesians 6, we know this, you put on the armor of God.

The helmet of salvation. The shield of faith. The breastplate of righteousness.

The sword of the Spirit. The shoes that are shod with the gospel of peace. But do you notice what's listed first? Don't underestimate God's Word.

When God's Word lists things first, there's a reason. Do not have any other gods before Me. That's not happenstance.

You get the first one right, and the other nine will take care of themselves. If you want to come after Me, deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow Me.

Get that one right. Somehow figure that one out in God. Deny yourself.

And the extent of the denial and the following wherever He leads you will take care of itself. What's the first piece that says to put on? The belt of truth. Satan's a genius.

You remove truth from any home, church, business, team, and now the collapse has been set into motion. And that's exactly what he's doing in the United States of America. He has taken the truth of God's Word, and first he did it years ago, and he says, you know what? Life's not valuable, and so we're going to abort, and we're going to murder babies.

And now he just did it recently in the last couple years here in our landscape. God wasn't serious. God didn't know what He was doing.

This man-woman marriage thing. He screwed it up. He got it all wrong.

Let's fix it for Him. You demean life, and you demean the family, and now your civilization is in a death spiral. So you just remove truth.

It's genius. All he has to do is remove truth because we're anchored to truth. Without truth, we are like a ship without a rudder.

You're like trying to fly an airplane without a rudder. You will crash and you will burn. Therefore, in this context, we are in a war, and we must man up and woman up and student up with the armor of God.

Every morning we get up and our feet hit the floor beating God's Word. Just have it flood and wash over your soul. This is so pivotal that we arm up with the armor of the spiritual battle, and that's what we're going to need.

Key number two. Write it down. As the clock is ticking, as the clock is ticking, I am commanded to cast off sin and put on the armor of God.

As the clock is ticking, I am commanded to cast off sin and put on the armor of God. Verse 13, Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and in envy. Don't need to go into these in depth.

They're pretty simple to understand there. Those words there in our English Bibles that have been translated are very similar to the ones from the original language, so I think we can surmise these things are not of God's. But I do find it interesting this point here.

Do you find it interesting what he's combined here together? Let me read these again quickly. Read this and understand this together. Here it is.

Ready? Let us walk properly. That means let us walk and behave. We're literally how we're living our lives.

Let us behave, live out a life that is pleasing to God and one that is a reflection of a true heart change. It's one thing to profess Christ, to get dunked, to get wet, raise a hand, say a prayer, stand on your head, whatever they ask you to do at your church service, but the reality is if your heart has never been truly changed, your heart's never been truly changed. Walk properly, not for your salvation.

It's by grace we've been saved, but we can't earn this thing. This is God working, but there is when our hearts are truly changed. There will be a behavior, not a modification.

Hey, let me just modify this. You know, there will be a behavioral change when the heart changes, even though we still live in these bodies of death. There will now be a longing to please the one who changed us.

And so here it is. Let us walk properly. Let's behave, live out, being pleasing to God, that living sacrifice.

Not in revelry and drunkenness. Not in lewdness and lust. Okay, we get those, don't we? None of us here today got to go, hey, is there any wiggle room on those four? None of us need to go, hey, is God okay if I maybe do this and it's still this and it's still in these four categories? No, this is wrong.

But here's the deal. Look what it says here. Not in strife and envy.

Do you find it interesting He combined those two things in there as well? What happens in your home and in your church if you're living today and you're in a home, if you're living today and you're in a church, if you're living today and you're in a business, if you're living today and you're on a team, there's going to be strife and envy. So critical we see what he's talking about. He's building this case.

The clock is ticking. He says, look, we can't continue to pursue self. We've got to take focus off self and understand what's at stake.

So pivotal there. And so key number three is simply this. Write this down.

As the clock is ticking. I am commanded to behave like a true Christ follower. But that seems like almost an insult, doesn't it? But you have to say that because that's what God's Word says in our culture today.

Hey, man, it's OK. You just live however you want. Again, you go to church.

You know, you say a prayer. Occasionally you're good. No, again, if you've truly been redeemed by this grace, Paul tells us this all through Romans.

Do we go on sinning that grace may abound? Well, certainly not. Our hearts have changed. It doesn't mean we have it perfect.

But man, there's a longing, a desire. There's a running hard after Jesus and His glory. And so that point number three again, as the clock is ticking, I am commanded to behave like a true Christ follower.

Lastly, v. 14. Here it is. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and here it goes.

This is the hard one. And make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. Put on the Lord Jesus.

We talked about this. It's that being clothed with. It's so glorious today if you're a true Christ follower that you have been clothed with Christ.

Isn't that a glorious definition to give someone? That they say, hey, I hear you're a Christian and I hear you go to this great church and you've got this great pastor and you guys are just reaching out to your community and just doing great stuff for God's glory. What does it mean to be a Christian? Oh, I've been clothed with Jesus and His righteousness. And what a beautiful picture that is, isn't it? These bodies of death that we're in.

There's so much struggle. There's so much heartache. There's so much pain.

And yet, oh, we're clothed with the righteousness. Righteousness of Christ. Write these verses down here.

Critical verses you're going to need this week. Galatians 2.20 One of my favorite verses. Galatians 2.20 You probably know it by heart.

I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I that live, but Christ that lives within me. Don't you love that? But I love how it goes on.

And the life which I now live in my flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. And all God's people shouted. That's awesome, isn't it? Isn't that good stuff? Colossians 1.27 Write this one down.

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Isn't that awesome? As Christ lives within you today, as you're putting on Christ, isn't that glorious? It's so glorious as He lives within you today. He's your hope.

Nothing else in this life will bring you hope like Jesus Christ will bring you. Therefore, we have a reason to rejoice. And make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust.

Making no provision for the flesh simply means this, do not provide for, do not supply. I almost kind of pictured this, that every living organism needs a life supply. Something to keep it living.

Well, it's the same way with our sin, isn't it? Man, if we continue to pump life, blood into our sin, whatever your struggle is today, it will keep on living. But man, when we crucify the flesh, when it's truly, it's no longer I. It's no longer I, but Christ that lives within me. Oh, what happens next? Our sin begins to have its life supply, its oxygen, its blood quenched and cut off and strangulated.

And once it's cut off and strangulated, our sin can be mortified. So pivotal to think through that. I made a note here.

Exchanging the truth of God for the lie of sin does not create joy. It only chains us onto a never-ending hamster wheel of darkness and despair. Don't buy into the lie today that somehow, man, if I go dive into this sin, there's going to be joy.

There's going to be a temporary time where there's some happiness in the flesh, but it will chain you to a never-ending hamster wheel of darkness and despair. We literally go into a self-imposed prison if we're not careful. That's what sin does.

That's the consequences and severity of sin. Acts 2.37, great verse. Write that down.

Acts 2.37. Now when they heard this... You've got to remember that the disciples, they're speaking to the crowds, and they are giving them the truth. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart. And they said to Peter, every pastor would love this, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? I mean, every pastor loves that.

We just love that people just flop in your boat at your church every Sunday and go, hey, what are we going to do next? I mean, wouldn't that be awesome? If it was just that easy, wouldn't it? What do we do? Hey, great! Here's what we do. Man, we repent. We turn.

Again, not just, hey, I'm going to improve my behavior. No, our heart is turning. We're no longer the same.

We are on God's page for His praise, for His glory, and we know it's always for our good. 1 Peter 4.7 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. And if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Wow! Key number four.

Here it is. Write it down. As the clock is ticking, I am commanded to guard against the deceitfulness of sin.

As the clock is ticking, I am commanded to guard against the deceitfulness of sin. You know, in closing today, we've got to remember this key point. The worst place that God leads you in obedience is infinitely greater than any place we lead ourselves in disobedience.

As we meditate on the Word of God, the clock is ticking. It's high time to wake out of our sleep. Salvation is nearer than we first believed.

The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us cast off the works of darkness.

Get rid of the works of darkness. Put on the armor of light. The belt of truth.

It holds the whole outfit together of the Roman soldier, that belt. You remove the belt, and you remove everything the Roman soldier is attached to in his attire. And therefore, what do we do? We put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh and its lusts.

I think of the song, I stand amazed in the presence, when with the ransom and glory, His face I at last shall see, to be my joy through the ages, to sing of His love for me. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how He could love me, a sinner condemned unclean. Amen.

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